

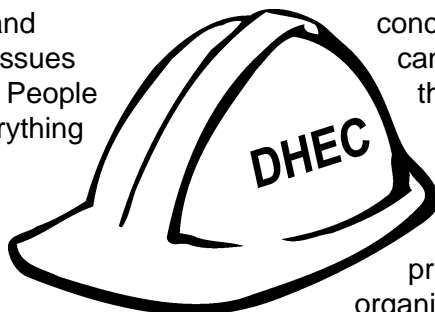


DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling

For Your Information...

Environmental Careers

There has been a renewed interest and understanding about environmental issues and how our actions affect the earth. People are beginning to understand that everything they do will have an effect on the environment whether positive or negative.



This renewed interest is becoming apparent with increasing awareness about issues such as waste management, cleaning up hazardous waste sites, concerns about having clean air and water, global warming and rainforest destruction. This renewed awareness and concern for the environment has brought with it an increase in the number of jobs available in the area of environmental protection. It has been estimated that about 3 million Americans are currently employed in the environmental field.

Not too long ago, the only environmental careers available were limited to science research and non-profit and advocate organizations. Now the field has expanded and jobs vary from science and law to insurance and public information. Listed below are several career categories.

Planning

Planners are needed for all areas that affect the environment. If planning is done well, many environmental problems can be avoided. Persons in environmental planning work to reduce air and water pollution, conserve wetlands, forests and vegetation and plan for solid waste management and land-use.

Environmental Education and Information

It is important for people to be aware of correct environmental facts and issues. There is a need for general education in every area of environmental

concern and a need to teach people how they can help. Teachers are, of course, one of the main sources of environmental education. There is also a need for public information about environmental issues especially through media outlets. Many government agencies, private corporations and non-profit organizations have public information staff.

These staff members are responsible for promoting environmental issues and communicating with the media in case of emergencies.

Waste Management

Solid and hazardous waste management is one of the largest fields in environmental protection. It includes the proper management of solid and hazardous waste, recycling, waste reduction and garbage pick-up. Careers in this field range from engineers, public information, economists, equipment operators, geologists and hydrologists.

Air Quality Management

Ensuring that the quality of our air is healthy is a difficult task because once pollutants are released into the air they disperse very quickly. Many of the jobs in the area of air quality deal with regulations. Some of these jobs include, but are not limited to, engineers, analytical chemists, meteorologists, toxicologists and risk assessment specialists.

Water Quality Management

There are many careers in water quality, some of which include drinking water protection and treatment, groundwater protection, surface water management, wetland protection, estuary management and wastewater treatment. Some specific job titles include aquatic ecologist, environmental engineer, hydrogeologist, biologist and regulatory specialist.

Energy

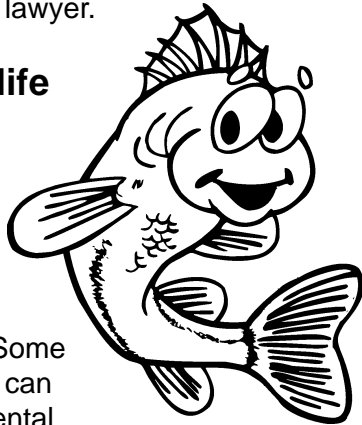
Wise energy use can provide many environmental benefits. Some of the jobs available working with energy include various engineers, public information officers, energy auditors and various utility jobs.

Land and Water Conservation

Land and water conservation involves the protection of wild lands and water bodies. There are many opinions as to whether land and water should be protected in pristine condition or whether it should be protected so that it is able to sustain diverse wildlife. Some areas of concentration include planning, natural resource assessment and management, habitat protection and restoration and preserving open spaces and natural habitats. Some specific jobs may include ecologist, biologist, ecotourism, environmental educator, resource engineering and forestry, soil conservation specialist, geographical information systems (GIS) specialist, land acquisition professional and lawyer.

Fishery and Wildlife Management

The primary goal of this career field is to maintain adequate populations of fish and wildlife and to protect species against extinction. Some specific job titles in this field can include naturalist, environmental educator, biologist, ecologist, marine biologist, endangered species biologist, botanist, aquaculturist, data manager and GIS specialist.



Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Parks and outdoor recreation jobs are most concentrated in the public sector. The primary goal of this career field is to protect and maintain the public parks in this country and to guide the public through these areas making it possible for everyone to enjoy the beauty of these public lands. Some of the jobs in this field include historian, biologist, botanist, archeologist, landscape architect, ranger, planner and forest pathologist.

Consider this – you don't have to go into an environmental field to have a positive impact on the environment. You can work in an agency like the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control whose mission is to protect the environment. Some of the jobs within the agency include nurses, accountants, lawyers, graphic artists, video producers, procurement staff, law enforcement officers, administrative assistants, positions that either directly or indirectly support persons working in the environmental field. These professionals help promote and protect the health of the public and the environment in South Carolina.

Any Job Can Be Environmental

You don't have to be in an environmentally oriented field to make a positive impact on the environment. Think about all things you can do at home, school or work to conserve natural resources. If your school or workplace doesn't have a waste reduction or recycling program, ask to set up one. Donate old computers and other items to schools or other organizations. Look for ways to save energy, too. Spread the word and set an example of good environmental stewardship.



DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling FYIs provide general information on environmental topics. Readers are encouraged to reproduce this material. For more information about solid waste issues, please call **1-800-768-7348** or visit our Web site at **www.scdhec.net/recycle**. Please send written correspondence to: DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.